Daimon as Motivator
By Elaine Danielle (Clark) Wise, PhD

I remember the first time I was consciously aware of that voice nagging me about my worthiness. Sometime during my first program at Pacifica I was standing at my pantry when that threshold guardian, always disguised as a protector, said very loudly and clearly, “Who do you think you are? You can’t possibly do something like this!” I stayed, gambling I had nothing to lose since I hoped to get a job to pay my loans back!

Since that day, I have been conscious of how that little daimon loves to shake me up. It taps into the haunting from childhood, those wounds that remind me I’m not good enough: don’t be vulnerable or something terrible will happen! For every accomplishment that little daimon has ten failures to remind me of.

While writing my dissertation it got louder and started winning. I was called to write about my childhood trauma and I got stirred up differently as I deepened into listening to my story, meeting my memories.

I procrastinated and my chair reminded me I was percolating. I got sick and Romanyshyn reminded me in The Wounded Researcher I was heeding the call. I felt paralyzed and I’d return to Jung and The Red Book to remember I could go into the wound, still live my life. and—perhaps, I hypothesized—change my perspective about my journey and my relationship with this self appointed protector. Then, one morning in the depth of the darkest moment I awoke to this chant: “You have nothing to offer to this world. You have nothing to say in this world.” I was shaking, sweating, feeling the anxiety that I had met the truth. I had come to the end of this journey. I lay there for hours in the dark wrestling with the fear.

Then I boldly faced this daimon. My research was to meet the imaginal and allow it to arise in dreams, art, and creative writing. I chose to be willing to meet the past with the present.

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Here is my daimon. I know what it looks like; I know what it feels like. In the moment of meeting I no longer need be paralyzed by my innermost fear. My research did change my life, my perspective. It is while facing these doubts we step up and engage our lives by standing up to the threshold guardian. My daimon, that will always rise to face self-doubt, is not a negative presence but a motivator to leave that past behind and move into a new future: To heed the call to adventure.

—Elaine Danielle (Clark) Wise is a 2016 Ph.D. graduate of Pacifica’s Depth Psychology-emphasis Somatics and 2002 Pacifica graduate M.A. Counseling Psychology. Dani offers workshops, retreats, coaching, and psychotherapy through WiseLife Consulting. She teaches somatic communication at University of Denver, University College and is a therapist at Arapahoe Community College. She recently launched www.ObolandCake.com with a fellow Pacifica alum, offering gift boxes for grief and change held by the myth of Psyche—reminding us that when we are confronted with our darkest moments, there is always support to guide us through.

George Orwell’s Rules of Writing

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent. (p. 359)

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Gremlin on Lambert Road Campus.
Photo by Rachel Reeve.
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